

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1 – 15 (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) ~~The I/C chip as defined in claim 15~~ An I/C chip  
suitable for wire bonding comprising:  
at least one conductive bond pad;  
at least one layer of dielectric material overlying said conductive bond pad;  
a surface defining an opening in said layer of dielectric material exposing said conductive  
bond pad; and  
a conductive seed layer disposed in said opening overlying said conductive bond pad and  
in contact therewith and in contact with the entire surface of said opening and having at least one  
exposed edge;  
two layers of Ni and Au plated on said conductive seed layer in said opening wherein the  
an intermediate conductive layer is of TaN/Ta is provided between said conductive seed layer  
and said conductive bond pad.

17. (Currently amended) The I/C chip as defined in claim ~~11~~ 16 wherein the  
conductive bond pad in the I/C chip is Al.

18. (Currently amended) The I/C chip as defined in claim ~~11~~ 16 wherein said  
at least one layer of conductive material defines a wall in said I/C chip in which is wholly  
disposed a ball bond and wire.

19. (Currently amended) The I/C chip as defined in claim ~~18~~ 16 wherein the ball bond is Au.